



OFCFCA
**Promoting healthy children, strong families,
and thriving communities county by county.**



COUNTY: SANDUSKY

MISSION STATEMENT / LOCAL FOCUS:

Sandusky County is a place where all individuals and families are healthy in mind, spirit and body, living in a safe, supportive community that provides opportunities for successful learning, working, playing and living. Partnerships For Success Mission - To embrace a collaborative and coordinated approach toward community action to increase the number of children and youth who are ready for and succeed in school and to decrease the number of children and youth who engage in risky behaviors in Sandusky County. The Sandusky County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) is a community planning partnership. The FCFC is a cost effective team driven organization that brings families, community and government together to help prevent and solve problems. The FCFC has been a proven vehicle for implementation of policies and effective utilization of resources as directed by Ohio Revised Code 121.37.

OPERATING STRUCTURE:

The Sandusky County Family and Children First Council has 21 voting members. Many other community members also participate in our strategic planning process. Our plan focuses on three long-term commitments and outcomes: 1) Sandusky County Children Are Ready for School, 2) Children and Youth Succeed in School, and 3) Children and Youth Engage in Healthy Behaviors. Our planning structure includes Council Committees and Community Partners. The FCFC Committee Structure includes: Council, Executive, Public Relations, Bylaws, Early Childhood Coordinating, Clinical, and Family Advisory/Parent Leadership. Our Community partners include: Community Members, Health Partners, Prevention Partnership, and Teen Pregnancy Prevention Advisory Group.

LOCAL FCFC CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Community Capacity Building/Planning:** strategies and outcomes
Sandusky County FCFC has a long-standing history of collaboration and planning based on a continuous quality cycle of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. The FCFC uses the Partnerships for Success (PFS) model of planning. The Sandusky County PFS effort has successfully brought together a number of collaborative efforts. Health Partners, which is made up of the CEO's from the major health organizations, surveys adults and youth and provides comparison data to measure our progress on a county-wide basis. This data informs our member organizations such as our Prevention Partnership (substance abuse prevention coalition). For example our youth smoking rate dropped dramatically from 27% in 2001 to 19% in 2005 to 14% in 2007. Many youth tobacco reduction strategies were implemented during this time period. However, our youth alcohol rate alarmed us with an increase in use between 2001 and 2005, so we began to intensify our underage drinking environmental prevention strategies. In 2007, our rate began to stabilize and show a slight decline. While it's too early to tell if this is a downward trend, this is a demonstration of how data informs our planning.
- **Service Coordination:** strategies and outcomes
Sandusky County FCFC uses the Wraparound Process of service coordination. Wraparound is a process to improve the lives of children and families who have complex needs and are involved with multiple agencies. A Wraparound Team develops an individual family plan, with the team being the four to ten people who know the child and family best, including the child and the family. Wraparound training is provided to community members and organizations so that team members will learn strength based skills used in the process. The annual cost of Sandusky County Wraparound is approximately \$25,000. In FY07, Wraparound was provided to 75 children. Consider the cost of one child in residential placement can exceed \$120,000 per year. The Family Development Matrix is used to evaluate Family Outcomes in the wraparound team process. In FY07, at intake the average score was in the "at risk" range and at close the average score was "stable".
- **Family Empowerment:** strategies and outcomes
The Sandusky County FCFC encourages parents to participate on the Council and on individual committees. Family satisfaction surveys are given to parents participating in FCFC programs. A

Parent Leadership class is held each year. The class helps parents to gain leadership skills. In FY07, 12 parents completed an 8 week session and each parent completed a community project as a first step in getting more involved in community life. Parent practicums ranged from family and individual projects such as gaining employment and working with the school on an Individual Education Plan for their child, to working on community projects such as building youth assets to helping with a local school levy.

- **Early Childhood System of Care:** strategies and outcomes

The goal of the FCFC Early Childhood Coordinating Committee is to have every child in Sandusky County reach their fullest potential by the time they reach school age. Help Me Grow newborn home visits, service coordination, and home visits to families of children ages 0-3 are provided by the Sandusky County Health Department and WSOS Community Action Commission. In FY08, Service Coordinators made 1,176 HMG home visits. An array of direct services into a seamless, accessible, family friendly system are administered locally by county based organizations. For example the Sandusky County Board of MRDD provides early intervention services. Research has shown that early intervention is effective in reducing the level of disability and the need for future (expensive) services.

LOCAL CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND RESPONSIBILITIES (As Applicable):

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention:** strategies and outcomes

Three local programs are provided via the Ohio Children's Trust Fund including parenting skills training to alternative high school students, family fun events with relationship building activities and parenting information, and home visits to parents with very young children. WSOS provided 282 home visits using a research-based parenting curriculum. The HOME inventory was used to measure responsiveness, acceptance, organization, learning materials, involvement and variety. Average scores for families from the initial home visit to follow-up showed an improvement in every area.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES: strategies and outcomes

Other initiatives include: No Wrong Door and other Cross-Training programs, Access to Better Care (Behavioral Health), Prevention Partnership (Substance Abuse Prevention), Teen Pregnancy Prevention.

FUNDING:

The Sandusky County FCFC receives approximately 12% local funds, 20% state funds, and 68% federal funds. The 2008 calendar year budget included \$86,614 for community planning, cross training, and grants management, and \$415,077 for direct and contract services.

STAFFING:

The Sandusky County FCFC has one full time Director and one half-time Wraparound Consultant.

CHALLENGES:

The Sandusky County FCFC receives outstanding financial and in-kind support from its local membership. However, with tighter financial budgets, the burden for this support continues to increase at the local level. Additional state support for the FCFC is needed, along with increasing flexible funding for direct services across member organizations. A state-wide data base with county specific data is also needed.

FUTURE PLANS:

Sandusky County FCFC will continue to focus on the commitments of our strategic plan, while closely monitoring program and community-wide data as well as needs, gaps and resources.

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